

Still Pretty by cat_77

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)
Genre: Gen, Spoilers, body image issues
Language: English
Characters: Eleven (Stranger Things)
Status: Completed
Published: 2016-10-02
Updated: 2016-10-02
Packaged: 2022-04-01 20:36:51
Rating: Teen And Up Audiences
Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply
Chapters: 1
Words: 1,100
Publisher: archiveofourown.org
Summary:

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Still Pretty

Author's Note:

For the "body image issues" entry at [hc_bingo](#).

He told her that she was pretty.

He gave her things she never had before. Clothing. Socks. Shoes. A jacket. Eggos.

The pink dress was styled like what Papa had her wear, but felt different to the touch. She found herself rubbing the skirt of it between her fingers and checking to make sure the collar was straight at the oddest of times. It was tighter in places and looser in others. She overheard people, kids mainly, say that pink was a color for girls. She was fine with that. She was, after all, a girl. It was a descriptor she preferred far more than "subject."

The socks were just like the pair he wore. They probably were his, actually. They kept her legs warm almost all the way up to her knees and, while not pink, had more color than just white to them. She liked colors. Didn't get them too often. These were basic, primary, but still hers. He said so. He said she could keep them if she wanted to or, even stranger, that his mother could buy her a pair all of her own.

She liked the shoes. They didn't quite fit, pinched in places and had far too much room where her toes should go. They might have just seemed tight because she really hadn't worn many pairs in her life. Possibly ever. They too kept her warm. They also protected the soles of her feet from rocks and dirt and all sorts of things. He told her people took them off to sleep, but never nagged her if she left them on instead.

She missed the jacket. The top layer was weird and smooth and kept the wind out. Probably kept some of the wet out too. The inside was softer, and had little bumps where the fabric had pilled from being worn too often. That she had left behind when she went into the pool. Not her pool, not the one Papa used, but the one they had made for her to help find Will. Made just for her, with math and science

and everything.

She had been given a shirt then. Soft but slightly scratchy blocks of color. She had been given blankets too, but those were left behind with the jacket. The shirt she still had though. It absorbed more wet than it blocked, but it was still another layer against the cold anyway. Sometimes, she would ball it up and use it as a pillow. The soft would help her sleep. The scratch would make sure she didn't go too deep.

She missed the yellow hair. Mike had told her she was still pretty without it, but then why did nobody call her pretty until she had it? It wouldn't have lasted here anyway, not that it was doing so well back there either. It had started to get knotted and dirty and, even though she watched people run a comb through their own hair, it just didn't seem to work the same with the yellow. It was also rather hard to keep in place to try.

Her own hair was growing longer now, just barely starting to curl at the edges. She hadn't brought a comb with her, and only had a mirror after she cleared the roots and slime off of one. It was probably more than just roots and slime, but she liked to pretend that's all it was. The mirror was on a wall in the school and she couldn't take it with her. She stopped there sometimes, wiped clean the glass and took a look at what she had become.

She did so today. Sometimes she crept into people's houses and used their bathroom, but it felt wrong to break in. The school was a public place though, and welcome to all boys and girls. As earlier stated, she was, after all, still a girl.

She carried her package with her this time, curious as to what it might be but keeping the suspense for as long as she could. It wasn't like there was a lot of change around here. Surprises, yes. Change, no. But she had seen a tiny hint of what was given to her, and decided just where she needed to be to open the rest.

It was a bag, a lot like the one Jonathan carried. Resting on top of it was a comb of her very own. Inside of it was the standard offering of food, something she had been incredibly grateful to find on what she thought was her third day in the place. Wrapped around the food was

a coat just like the one Mike had lent her. It didn't have the pills, but it was soft and had the smooth fabric on top and she quickly took off the shirt with the blocks to put it on. There was also a pair of sweatpants and another shirt that was way too big for her but had a drawing of a kitten on it. At the very bottom, underneath what might have been a bar of soap, was a pair of socks.

She pulled those on readily enough even though it meant losing her shoes for the briefest of moments. She also pulled the comb through her hair, or tried to. There were a lot of knots and it was a very new thing to her to try to untangle them. She did her best though, clearing the mirror with a swipe of her mind to stare into and try to figure out which way to go.

It was because she was using the mirror that she saw the monster approach. Not a full demogorgan, it was much too small for that. This place had far more than a single creature though, and she had quickly learned which ones to hide from and which ones to get rid of. A thought, and it crumpled to the ground at her feet, limbs askew and body writhing. Another, and it stopped making the awful noise that would call other, and possibly larger, things to her.

She looked to the mirror again and made one last sweep through her hair with the comb before tucking it safely away. With a nod, she pulled out an Eggo and took a bite, catching a glimpse of the familiar in the act.

"Still pretty," she announced a mouthful of waffle. There was no one around to challenge the claim, and so she was going to repeat Mike's words until she believed them again.

Either that, or until he could tell her again himself.